

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace Para [0017] with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0017] --The invention may be better understood with reference to the following drawings of preferred embodiments of the invention, in which:

Fig. 1 depicts an embodiment of the apparatus including a first cylinder and a second cylinder;

Figs. 2-1 and 2-2 depict cross-sectional views of the first and second cylinders, including embodiments of the corresponding, first and second securing means;

Figs. 2-3 and 2-4 depict cross-sectional views of the first and second cylinders, including embodiments of the corresponding, first and second securing means;

Figs. 3-1 and 3-2 depict a plan view of the first cylinder of **Fig. 2-2** and an enlarged view of a portion of this first cylinder showing circumferentially arranged suture-relief holes;

Fig. 4 depicts another embodiment of the apparatus including a first cylinder and a second cylinder, with a valve sleeve surrounding the lower portion of the exterior surface of the first cylinder;

Fig. 5 depicts yet another embodiment of the apparatus including a first cylinder and a second cylinder, with a valve sleeve having an annular cuff and three securing struts;

Fig. 6 depicts the embodiment of **Fig. 5**, wherein the securing means of the first and second cylinders are snapped into engagement, and the secured sutures have been trimmed;

Fig. 7 depicts the embodiment of **Fig. 4** mounted on a guiding rod;

Fig. 8 depicts the embodiment of **Fig. 4** mounted on an insertion device including a guiding rod, securing member, and urging means;

Fig. 9 depicts an expanded view of the insertion device of **Fig. 8**;

Fig. 10 depicts the insertion device of **Fig. 8**, with the urging member depressed, such that the second cylinder is snapped into engagement with the first cylinder; and

Fig. 11 depicts an expanded view of the insertion device of **Fig. 10**.--

Please replace Para [0019] with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0019] --First cylinder 10 comprises an exterior surface 12 and an interior surface 18 and a second (or upper) end 14 and a first (or lower) end 16. Further, first cylinder 10 includes a first securing means 15. Similarly, second cylinder 20 comprises an interior surface 22 and a first (or upper) end 24. Second cylinder 20 also includes a second securing means 25. Second securing means 25 correspond to and are adapted to engage first securing means 15. For example, first securing means 15 may be an annular lip and second securing

Q2 means 25 may be a corresponding annular groove, or vice versa, as depicted in Figs. 2-1 and 2-2 and Figs. 2-3 and 2-4, respectively. --
